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PDRY THREAT TO SAUDI ARABIA

The PDRY has employed its forces on limited missions against Saudi Arabia on three occasions in recent years: a border war in 1969; an air strike in the spring of 1973; and an incident involving ground patrols in the summer of 1976. PDRY forces are experienced in supporting insurgency in Oman's Dhofar Province, and more recently in assisting Ethiopian forces fighting in the Ogaden region against Somalia. Moreover, in 1979, the PDRY Government fought a border war with North Yemen and is continuing to support anti-government forces there.

-- The Soviets are continuing their efforts to build a very well equipped PDRY force capable of serious trouble-making in the region. For example, we estimate the Soviets have signed more than three quarters of a billion dollars worth of arms agreements since 1967. Sales include SU-20/22 fighters, MIG 17, 21 and 23s, T-62 tanks, Osa guided missile patrol boats, Frog rocket launchers and helicopters.

-- Although a full scale attack by PDRY on Saudi Arabia is unlikely, other contingencies are possible and Saudi Arabia must have strong deterrent forces on its southern and southwestern borders. The PDRY has cooperated with the Soviet Union in support of radical Ethiopia -- including providing military personnel during the Ogaden fighting. We estimate there are 500 - 1000 Soviet military advisors and 500 Cuban military advisors in the PDRY. Therefore, Saudi planning must address the possibility that the PDRY's communist allies would provide assistance in personnel and equipment to the PDRY in any time of crisis.